

Marland School

Devon County Council, Marland School, Peters Marland, Torrington, Devon, EX38 8QQ

Inspection dates	03/03/2015	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- A strength of this service is the quality of relationship between staff and students and the commitment that leaders, managers and staff have shown in reducing the use of restraint in the school. This has resulted in the significant reduction in the use of restraint, in particular the use of 'ground holds' since the last inspection. Staff consider that their 'relationships with the students' is their main tool when managing behaviours. This has resulted in a change of culture and ethos at the school that clearly focusses on the use of de-escalation.
- Leaders and managers have an excellent awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There is good leadership and management of the residential provision. Academic staff and residential staff effectively work together for the benefit of the students. Leaders and managers have completed a comprehensive development plan for the school that includes matters relating to the residential provision.
- Students feel that they learn new skills such as cleaning, cooking and 'getting on with one another'. One boarder said ' I have learnt how to keep my bedroom clean and tidy'. Students have access to an excellent choice of activities both in the school and the wider community.
- Staff are well supported; they receive regular supervision and annual appraisals. The vast majority of staff have formal qualifications and receive good training opportunities to further enhance their skills.
- Areas for improvement include undertaking specific environmental risk assessments of the residential provision, improving the content of care plans, ensuring that staff receive regular fire refresher training and reviewing the menu. In addition, leaders and managers continue to explore opportunities to improve the quality of the residential provision. This is an ongoing challenge for the school due to the age and fabric of the building.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

The school was contacted on the morning of the inspection and inspectors arrived at the school after 12 midday. Inspectors visited the residential provision, observed staff interaction, activities, arranged a group meeting with staff as well as individual discussions. Inspectors spoke to residential pupils, head of care, the Principal, a social worker over the phone and a school Governor. In addition, they scrutinised a variety of records, documents and policies and procedures. On line surveys from residential pupils were evaluated and feedback given to the Principle and head of care. No views on parent view were available at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

David Kidner

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Marland School is a local authority maintained residential special school. It provides care and education during term time for up to 40 boys aged 10-16 years. The residential accommodation is provided in the main school building. The school is situated on the outskirts of a local town. It caters for young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The residential provision was last inspected in February 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ensure that the accommodation is suitably furnished and of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of children accommodated.
- ensure the school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are assured. In particular, that the environmental risk assessment clearly identifies the know risks in the residential provision.
- ensure that all children, including those with special dietary, medical or religious needs, are provided with meals which are adequate in nutrition, quantity, quality, choice and variety. In particular, reviewing the menu following the most recent audit of students views.
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up to date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school. In particular, that all staff receive refresher training in fire prevention.
- ensure the school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. In particular, that the placement plan clearly evidences how achievements are measured and give staff clear guidance how targets are to be met.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Good

Outcomes for students are good. The majority of students enjoy staying at the school. They enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff and their peers. Students are supportive to one another and give each other praise and encouragement. This is a strength of the school.

Students generally behave well and are supported to adapt and manage their behaviour. Incentives in managing their behaviours, alongside praise and encouragement raises students' self-esteem and emotional resilience. One social worker said 'the confidence and self-esteem has improved significantly in one young man in particular'.

Students develop life skills and a significant number of students leave the school to continue into further education or to access an apprenticeship.

The health needs of students are promoted. Students are aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and gain access to a variety of information in respect of keeping healthy, safe and well. Students are unanimous in their views that there are staff that they can speak to if they are worried about something and that they are well looked after if they are feeling ill.

Students have access to an excellent range of activities. They are enthusiastic about the activities that are provided and they feel that their views are listened to.

Students benefit from good communication between residential and academic staff. This promotes continuity and consistency in the delivery of their individualised care and support needs.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

The quality of care of residential pupils is good. The school has a robust admissions process. Leaders and managers ensure that thorough assessments of prospective students' needs are obtained prior to their arrival at the school.

Students receive good pastoral care and individualised support. Effective communication links between academic and residential staff ensure continuity and consistency in students care and support. The vast majority of students enjoy their boarding experience and unanimously consider that they can easily keep in contact with their family and friends.

Students access an excellent variety of social, leisure and recreational facilities. They are very enthusiastic about the choice and range of activities that are on offer. Students choose what activities they wish to pursue on a daily basis. This is undertaken in the form of a number of choices being made available each evening. Students actively give encouragement to one another if they are unsure what activity to undertake. They highlight each other's strengths in particular activities. This demonstrates students' awareness of each other's strengths and they are able to show compassion and consideration for others.

Care plans contain detailed information about students individual needs. Targets are set to promote independence, confidence and life skills. They contain the achievements that students have made since their last review. However, the format in which these are presented does not clearly evidence how achievements are measured, or give staff clear guidance how targets are to be met. The care plans are supported by risk assessments that identify the known risks. These are regularly reviewed to reflect their current needs.

Parents and social workers are complimentary about the care and support that is provided at the school. One social worker said 'I have no concerns at all about the quality of care provided at the school, they regularly keep me informed and there is excellent communication with residential staff'. One parent said 'the school are able to identify pupils needs and set out expectations that the child and family understand, and they've met those'

There are good arrangements for healthcare and the management of medicines. Young people have very individualised health care plans. Detailed records are kept of appointments to a variety of healthcare professionals including GP, dentist, optician and mental health services if required. The school is proactive in offering support and advice in matters relating to personal relationships and emotional health. Students consider that they feel looked after if they feel unwell. Students feel listened to and are able to express their views and opinions.

Despite continuous efforts by leaders and managers to make improvements in the residential provision, the environment continues to hamper efforts to provide students with homely accommodation. The layout and structure of the building does not lend itself to providing care and support to these students. As such, and despite the best efforts of the team, some institutionalised care practices such as locking doors and the use of CCTV in corridors and walkie talkies remain for safety reasons. These practices are in direct conflict with the highly positive and nurturing relationships which are the lynchpin of the success of this school. The building is dated and a high level of maintenance is required in order to ensure that the standard is acceptable.

Since the last inspection there are improvements in the environment and some areas of the provision have been redecorated, new bedroom furniture has been provided for the storage of clothing, and to provide study space. Students are happy with their bedrooms and the facilities that they provide. Bathroom and toilet facilities are well maintained and clean. The head teacher and head of pastoral care continue to make efforts to improve the residential accommodation and liaise and meet with the local authority, and other authorities in order to attempt to secure improvements in the provision.

Students have mixed views about the variety of food that is on offer. Menus demonstrate choices of meals that includes a vegetarian option. The catering manager sources local fresh ingredients and there is always fresh fruit and vegetables on offer. Bread and cakes are home made. The catering manager has undertaken an audit of the food and requested information of likes and dislikes. A menu based upon the replies and outcomes of this audit has yet to be devised.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

The safety of residential pupils is good. At the last inspection there was a shortfall in the national minimum standard for residential special schools in respect of promoting positive behaviour and relationships. In particular, matters relating to the use of restraint and the written records pertaining to restraint and sanctions. This shortfall has been met.

There has been excellent progress in relation to behaviour management and the approach to physical interventions. The shift in culture has served to enhance and develop strong nurturing relationship between the staff team and young people. The use of ground holds has ceased and overall, there has been a dramatic reduction in the use of physical intervention.

One staff member said 'everyone's working practice has changed, no ground holds, this has had a calming impact and has helped to make connections with young people' and added 'the tool is our relationships and de-escalation and knowing the young people is the key'.

Students said 'restraint doesn't happen much and staff don't hold young people on the ground

anymore'. All staff receive training and refresher training in the school's chosen method of de-escalation and restraint.

Leaders and managers have driven this positive change. They have effectively monitored and supported the staff team to develop their skills and to de-escalate potentially volatile scenarios skilfully and with much success.

Sanctions are used fairly frequently, but this is reasonable in relation to effective behaviour management and demonstrates clear boundaries. The recording of sanctions and incidents of restraint have improved and leaders and managers effectively examine trends or issues to inform future practice.

Safeguarding practice is good. The school has robust policies and procedures in place to keep students safe. All staff receive safeguarding training and demonstrate a good understanding of procedures and protocols. Any investigations into allegations matters relating to allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly and quickly.

The school has effective policies and protocols in place if students are missing. Leaders and managers ensure that episodes of students going missing are recorded in detail and that interviews are held with students when they return.

Leaders and managers respond appropriately to any matters raised in respect of bullying. Students are unanimous in their views that the school deals well with any cases of bullying. One student said 'it does happen but staff stop it'. Comprehensive records are maintained in respect of this and these are closely monitored.

The school gives a high priority to the safety to its students and on the whole they feel safe. Social workers and parents consider that students are safe at the school.

The school operates safe recruitment procedures. Staff recruitment files are well ordered and there is an audit system in place to ensure that all checks are complete before staff commence in post. All recently appointed staff have complete checks in place which helps to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

The school provides a safe and acceptable environment and has completed a number of environmental risk assessments, and off site activity risk assessments. However, it is noted that the environmental risk assessment that has been completed for the main building, and when the residential provision is provided, does not clearly identify the risks that have been identified and the steps taken to reduce the risk. Good quality records are maintained in respect of the promotion of fire safety. Students are aware of the school's fire procedure and have been involved in a fire drill. However, it is noted that not all staff have received refresher training in fire prevention.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The leadership and management of the school is good. The school's Statement of Purpose clearly outlines the aims of the residential provision. Leaders and managers have an excellent awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They clearly demonstrate their commitment to drive improvement in the school. In particular, their determination to improve the quality of the residential provision.

The residential provision is well managed and leaders, managers and staff work together to improving outcomes for students. The residential provision is seen as an important part of the school. The school has strong self-evaluation procedures and regular and effective monitoring

visits are undertaken by governors.

Leaders and managers have met the identified shortfalls in the national minimum standard relating promoting positive behaviour and record keeping. As a result, the use of restraint has reduced and the school has improved its record keeping in respect of sanctions and physical intervention. In addition, there has been improvements in the recording of students' feedback following the use of restraint, some improvement to the residential environment and an improvement in records relating to the recruitment of staff.

Leaders and managers seek students and parents views. An anonymous survey to students and parents was undertaken in January 2015 and the outcomes have been evaluated. These outcomes informs the schools development plan. The results of the surveys demonstrate that there is a high level of satisfaction of the care and support provided by the school.

Leaders and managers are supported by a dedicated and motivated staff team. Staff receive regular supervision and an annual appraisal. They feel that they are well supported by the senior management team. Staff receive good quality training and 85% of staff are qualified at level 3. The remaining staff are undertaking the qualification. It is evident that there are positive relationships between all staff across the school.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	131552
Social care unique reference number	SC022231
DfE registration number	878/7088

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	
Number of boarders on roll	
Gender of boarders	
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Mr Keith Bennett
Date of previous boarding inspection	12/02/2014
Telephone number	01805 601 324
Email address	admin@marland.devon.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

